

Tastes We've Lived By. Taste Metaphors in English

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Abstract

This paper investigates the evolution of the semantic domain of the sense of taste in English, by looking at the data produced by the Mapping Metaphor Project (MMP) at the University of Glasgow. Although, for centuries, the sense of taste has been ranked as the lowest sense and received scant attention, recent studies in cognitive science and philosophy advocate a reconsideration of its importance in language and cognition. With the help of the linguistic data of the MMP, I propose an account of the role of the sense of taste in English. To do so, I identify and classify various conceptual metaphors that motivate semantic change in which the sense of taste is either Source domain or Target domain. Results show that the domain of Taste may serve alternatively as Source domain (e.g. PLEASURE IS SWEET), but also as Target (TASTE IS THE QUALITY OF A PERSON).

Keywords: taste, conceptual metaphor, semantic change.

1. Introduction

The sense of taste is one of the basic perception modalities, and its main function is that of guiding our dietary choices not only in terms of palatability, but also of edibility. Taste not only tells us what is pleasant to eat, but also what is potentially toxic, or poisonous (Holley 2006). All animals must eat to survive: it is such a widespread activity though surprisingly it has received only scant attention in both philosophical and linguistic investigations. Yet, one of the reasons for its neglect might be because it operates on a basic, almost irrational level. As Korsemeier notes, “Taste is associated with appetite, a basic drive that propels us to eat and drink. Its role in sheer animal existence is one of the factors that has contributed to its standard neglect as a subject of philosophical inquiry” (1999:

1). The taste lexicon is apparently not as variegated as that of other domains, such as sight or hearing. Despite some accounts of the semantic domain of Taste in specific contexts (such as wine tasting: Caballero 2007, Lehrer 1975, 1983, 2007), the role of taste in conceptualisation and semantic change has not been systematically reviewed. In this paper, I argue for a revaluation of taste, showing that it plays an important role in language, especially through the cognitive mechanism of conceptual metaphor that enables meaning transfer from embodied perception to more abstract concepts.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (hence CMT) has inspired and motivated a large amount of research in various fields of investigation (see Fusaroli and Morgagni 2013). Conceptual metaphors may be placed on a continuum of conventionality: novel metaphors are less frequent in everyday speech, while conventional ones are more entrenched and well used in a speech community (Kövecses 2010). The entrenchment of conceptual metaphors may lead to phenomena of polysemy and semantic change successfully investigated and accounted for through CMT. Sweetser (1990) examines semantic change as following patterns of metaphorical transfer from more concrete to more abstract domains, in what she recognises as the Mind-As-Body metaphor. Lehrer proposes an in-depth account of polysemy as motivated by CMT, thus concluding that “although noncentral senses of words cannot be predicted from central senses, they are not arbitrary; rather they are motivated by image-schema transformations and metaphorical models” (1990: 239-40).

The role of conceptual metaphors in motivating language change is at the basis of the Mapping Metaphor with the Historical Thesaurus Project (henceforth MMP, <http://mappingmetaphor.arts.gla.ac.uk/>) developed at the University of Glasgow. The results of the project are now available online in the form of a ‘Metaphor Map’ that encompasses metaphorical links in the whole semantic space of English. The aim of the project is to investigate the overlap between lexical categories within the *Historical Thesaurus* (HT), which contains more than 800,000 word senses taken from the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED). The overlap between different categories is constituted by the entirety of the words found in more than one category. The underlying assumption is that the appearance of the same lexical item in two or more categories might be motivated by conceptual metaphor. To validate this hypothesis,

the researchers firstly divided the items in the HT into 415 distinct semantic categories, and grouped them in three macro-categories: External World; Mental World; Social World. Secondly, the researchers mapped each of the 415 semantic categories against each other, to identify lexical overlap between the categories. The results of this process allowed the researchers to identify lexical items that are present in two or more categories.

The data elicited were manually analysed to determine whether a connection was metaphorical or not. The results show that, “only a small proportion of the lexical overlap is due to metaphor: the majority is a result of polysemy motivated by processes other than metaphor (such as widening, narrowing, and metonymy), and ‘accidental’ connections such as homonymy” (Anderson and Bramwell 2013: 43). As clarified in the next section, the research presented in this paper aims at identifying the conceptual metaphors (hence CM) that motivate the linguistic realisations recognised by the MMP.

2. Methodology

The results of the MMP are available online and comprehend a large quantity of data. However, they do not identify CMs, but rather collect the linguistic overlap between semantic categories. This paper reports the analysis of the lexical overlap between the semantic category of Taste and the other categories that emerged in the MMP. The aim of my research is the identification of the CMs that motivated semantic change of the taste lexicon in English.

Firstly, I conducted a quantitative analysis of the metaphorical connections identified by the MMP team between the category 1110¹ *Taste* and the other categories. I divided the directions of the metaphorical transfer into three groups: 1. from Taste-SD into another TD (for instance category 2G03 *Speaking*, e.g. *sweet* words);

¹ In the Metaphor Map each category has a code, which is informative of a hierarchical relationship. Numbers 1, 2, and 3 refer to External, Mental, or Social world, respectively. 1A, 2D, or 3E refer to the second tier of groupings (major categories such as Animals, Emotion or Law). The last number refers to the lowest level of categorisation. Thus, for example, the code 1110 for category *Taste* reflects the following hierarchy: 1 (External world); 11 (Physical sensation); 1110 (Taste).

2. from a SD into Taste-TD (for instance category 1Lo3 *Size and spatial extent*, e.g. a *flat* drink), or 3. both ways (for instance category 1A16 *Minerals*, e.g. *metallic* taste; *sweet* coal).

Secondly, I classified the lexical overlaps between the category 1I10 *Taste* and the other categories in the database according to the metaphorical mappings that motivate them. I elaborated two different categorisation methods. These methods aim at organising the lexical overlap presented by the MMP in CMs that motivate the polysemy of taste words in English. The first method is broad, and is informed only by the lexical categories identified by the MMP. It offers a bird's-eye view of the role of taste in English, proposing a central mapping that may account for more specific realisations. The second method of categorisation is more specific, and is informed by the HT entries for the lexical items in each category. The results show the role that the sense of taste has in English in structuring different semantic domains, and those that have structured the domain of Taste.

In illustrating the data, I report the dates of usage as indicated by the HT: when a word is followed by a single date, it has only one recorded OED citation in that sense; when the word is followed by a date and a dash, it was first recorded from that date and is still current; when there are two dates, these show the first and last recorded citation for that sense. The date of a last recorded sense does not necessarily imply that the sense is no longer in use. Dates may be prefixed by *a* (*ante*: before) or *c* (*circa*: about) to show uncertainty in the dates². The symbol † indicates a sense that is no longer current.

3. Quantitative analysis

This section proposes a quantitative overview of the metaphorical lexical overlap identified by the MMP. Table 1 illustrates the quantitative analysis of the lexical categories that overlap between category 1I10 *Taste* and the lexical macro-categories of External

² For specific information, see *Guide to the use of the thesaurus*, available online at http://historicalthesaurus.arts.gla.ac.uk/downloads/HTOED_Front_Matter_2009_-_Guide_to_the_Use_of_the_Thesaurus.pdf (last accessed Aug. 30th 2016).

World, Mental World and Social World, organised by the direction of the transfer, which can be SD (Taste as Source domain), TD (Taste as Target domain) or bidirectional (when the metaphorical transfer goes in both ways). The category 1I10 *Taste* is part of the macro-category External World.

TABLE 1
Quantified lexical overlap between macro-categories and the category 1I10 *Taste*

	SD	TD	bidirectional	Total
External World	27	25	5	57
Mental World	31	1	3	35
Social World	16	0	1	17
Total	74	26	9	109

The total number of the lexical categories that 1I10 *Taste* overlaps with is 109. The entirety of overlapping categories is divided as follows: 52.3% belong to the External World; 32.1% belong to the Mental World, while 15.6% of categories pertain to the Social World. The SD group contains 67.9% (74) of the lexical categories, which is not surprising considering the basic nature of the sensory experience. The TD group is less conspicuous (23.8%, 26 lexical categories), and is mainly constituted by categories in the External World. This finding suggests a violation to the principle of unidirectionality of metaphorical transfer, that states that “bodily experience is a source of vocabulary for our psychological states, but not the other way around” (Sweetser 1990:30). For instance, the category 2D16 *Fear* contains the lexical item †*palled* (c1430–1884, meaning *insipid*) that describes Taste. Nevertheless, the majority of lexical categories in the Mental World uses 1I10 as an SD, in keeping with the aforementioned principle.

The lexical categories 1A16 *Minerals*, 1I09 *Touch*, 1I13 *Hearing and Noise*, 1J02 *Chemistry*, 1J03 *Weight, heat and cold*, 2A11 *Wisdom*, 2D07 *Anger*, 2D17 *Courage*, 3K07 *Materials and fuel* belong to the bidirectional group, in which the category 1I10 *Taste* is both Source and Target domain. An example of this double relationship is 2D07 *Anger*. Terms such as *bitter* (c1175-), *bitterness* (1382-), *sour* (a1400-), *sourness* (1482-), *tartness* (1548), *acrimony* (1618), *embitter*

(1634), *acidity* (1711), *vinegary* (1848) came to refer to an angry temperament, but they originally belong to 1I10 *Taste*. On the other hand, words such as *angry* (c1375), and *vehement* (1600) originally pertained to 2Do7 *Anger*, but there is evidence of their usage in reference to *Taste*.

4. Qualitative analysis

This section proposes the qualitative analysis of the lexical overlap between category 1I10 *Taste* and the other categories. I identified a central mapping, i.e., a general, superordinate CM that can motivate more specific CMs. The domains that constitute such CMs are groups of lexical categories identified by the MMP team in which the lexical items are metaphorically transferred. This section consists of two parts: the first one offers a broad picture of the role of *Taste* in English, while the second one deals with the semantic domains that more often rely on *Taste* to be conceptualised.

4.1. First method: central mapping

The central mapping as emerging from the data in the Metaphor Map is CHARACTER IS TASTE. That is, the sense of taste is generally used to conceptualise the essence and features of someone (or something). The mappings that constitute such metaphor are in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Set of mappings for the metaphor CHARACTER IS TASTE

<i>Source:</i>	<i>Target:</i>
(a) taste	→ character
(b) a palatable flavour	→ a positive character
(c) an unpalatable flavour	→ a negative character
(d) tasting	→ knowing
(e) tasting a palatable flavour	→ having a positive opinion
(f) tasting an unpalatable flavour	→ having a negative opinion
(g) sweetening	→ making something positive
(h) embittering	→ making something negative

The character of something can be conceptualised as its taste or flavour, as exemplified by category 1J24 *Electromagnetism and atomic physics*. In this lexical category, the word *flavour* denotes a symmetry that characterises different types of quark. In other words, each quark has a different flavour which predicts its behaviour and character (Bissi, personal communication, 17/02/2016).

Despite being far from common usage, this metaphor is indicative of the role of Taste in conceptualising the essence of someone or something. Another example is the overlap with category 1K01 *Existence and its attributes*, where words such as †*tarage* (1429-1450), *taste* (1477), *flavour* (1866-) refer to the character or nature of something, as in examples (1-2), retrieved from the COCA³:

- 1) The cakes were for later. We were taking a *taste* of Korea home⁴.
- 2) It's an excellent time to experience the *flavor* of one of my favorite beach towns⁵.

A palatable flavour corresponds to a positive and agreeable character, while an unpalatable one corresponds to a negative character. Examples for this mapping come from category 1O22 *Behaviour and conduct*:

- 3) I received half a guinea, the *sweetest* that ever found its way into my pocket⁶.
- 4) For thou writest *bitter* things against mee⁷.

The act of tasting is used to conceptualise the act of knowing or having experience of, as shown by the lexical overlap with a number of lexical categories. In 1I06 *Sexual relations*, the item †*taste* (1611-1752) is used to conceptualise “have sexual intercourse with”:

³ COCA corpus is an online corpus that consists of more than 450 million tokens from a variety of genres. The sources of examples are distinguished by abbreviations: ACAD (academic), FIC (fiction), MAG (magazine), NEWS (newspaper), SPOK (spoken).

⁴ (COCA, NEWS 2015).

⁵ (COCA, NEWS 2015).

⁶ W. Ballantine, *Some Experiences of a Barrister's Life* (1882) iv, 41; OED sweet (adj.), sense 5a.

⁷ *Bible* (King James) (1611), Job xiii. 26; OED bitter (adj.), sense 7.

5) If you can mak't apparant That you haue *tasted* her in Bed; my hand,
And Ring is yours⁸.

The categories 2A07 *Perception and cognition* and 2A20 *Knowledge and experience* contain lexical items that instantiate the same mapping of the scope of metaphor. In the first one, both †*savour* (1340-1440) and †*taste* (1583-1616) mean “perceive”:

6) In your writings I *savour* a spirit so very distant from my disposition, that I have small hopes that my words will escape your displeasure⁹.

Category 2A20 *Knowledge and experience* contains *taste* (1300) with the meaning of “experience (slightly)”, or the extinct †*gust* (1658-1698) with the meaning of “experience (a taste/experience of)”:

7) Where was... the promised rest? Before I had a *taste* of it, it was vanished¹⁰.

8) In seventy or eighty years a Man may have a deep *Gust* of the World¹¹.

The experience of tasting a palatable flavour structures a positive opinion, while tasting an unpalatable flavour corresponds to having a negative opinion. The meaning of *sweet* (1300-) in 2B12 *Beauty and ugliness* (with pleasing appearance) is motivated by mapping (e) in Table 2, while the meaning of *sour* (1937-) in 3M04 *Music* (out of tune) is motivated by mapping (f). The act of sweetening something corresponds to making something positive, while embittering corresponds to making something negative. Thus, *sweeten* in 1A15 *Geological features* (1733/1765-) means “become fertile”, while *embitter* in 1O22 *Behaviour and conduct* (1634-) refers to making someone irritated:

9) The Captain... had much *embittered* the people against him¹².

⁸ Shakespeare, *Cymbeline* (1623) ii. iv. 57; OED taste (v.), sense 3b.

⁹ P. Heylyn, *Certamen Epistolare* (1659), 8; OED savour (v.), sense 6b.

¹⁰ C. Lamb in *The London Magazine* (1825), May 68; OED taste (n.), sense 3c.

¹¹ Sir T. Browne, *Christian Morals* (1716), iii. 110; OED gust, sense 7 (1682).

¹² G. Anson, *A Voyage around the World* (ed. 4) (1748), II. iii. 208; OED embitter (v.), sense 4.

The mappings of the CHARACTER IS TASTE metaphor in Table 2 describe the role of the sense of taste in English. They offer a broad view on the usage of taste words. The next section offers a finer grained picture, including the semantic domains that are often conceptualised as Taste in English.

4.2. Second method: semantic domains

I now present 3 of the 12 semantic domains that I identified in the lexicographic data as SD, and 1 of the 4 TD. The semantic domains combine different lexical categories on the basis of the HT entries of individual lexical items. For instance, lexical categories 1B11 *Body parts*, 1B23 *Vascular system*, 1Co1 *Health*, 1Co4 *Healing and treatment*, and 1O5 *Invigoration* are conflated in the HEALTH semantic domain.

A semantic domain that relies on Taste for its conceptualisation is that of FEELINGS, thus giving rise to the FEELINGS ARE TASTES CM (Table 3). It motivates the lexical overlap between Taste and the categories 1Io1 *Physical sensation*, 2Do2 *Strong emotion and lack of emotion*, 2Do3 *Excitement*, 2Do5 *Pleasure*, 2Do6 *Emotional suffering*, 2Do8 *Love and friendship*, and 2Do9 *Hatred and hostility*. As predicted by the mappings of the scope of metaphors (see Table 2), positive feelings are conceptualised by palatable tastes, while negative feelings are conceptualised by unpalatable tastes.

Metaphorical entailments from this metaphor are EXCITEMENT IS SAVOUR (*salt, spicy*), LACK OF EMOTION IS LACK OF SAVOUR (*tasteless*). The inclusion of the lexical category 1Io1 *Physical sensation* is motivated by the HT entries for the items, which showed that their meanings refer to pleasure and gratification, or lack thereof. The start era of the metaphorical link between the domains of Taste and that of FEELINGS ranges from Old English to the first half of the 16th century.

HEALTH is another semantic domain that has made use of Taste to be conceptualised. The metaphorical links between the categories have been classified as “weak” by the MMP. The lexical items motivated by this CM are all extinct, with the exception of *vapid*¹³ (1684-) in 1B23 *Vascular system*.

¹³ 1. lacking or having lost life, sharpness, or flavor; insipid; flat: ex. *vapid tea*; 2. without liveliness or spirit; dull or tedious: *a vapid party; vapid conversation*; <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/vapid?s=t>

TABLE 3
Lexical categories in the FEELINGS ARE TASTES CM

CATEGORY NAME	START ERA	EXAMPLES
1I01 Physical sensation	1300-1349	savour, sweet, sugared, lick one's lips, taste, tastelessness, bitter-sweet;
2Bo8 Contempt	1150-1199	bitter, acid, causticity, gamy;
2Do1 Emotion	1550-1599	dulce, sugary, flavour, sweetly, saccharine, saccharinity;
2Do2 Strong emotion and lack of emotion	1550-1599	tasteless, tastelessness;
2Do3 Excitement	1550-1599	sauce, salt, savour, gusto, haut-goût, piquant, flavorful, spicy, nutty, saltily;
2Do5 Pleasure	Old English	sweetness, sweet, savoury, bitter-sweet, honeyed, mellifluous, taste, sugary, honey-some, gustful, palatable, saccharine, sugar-candyish;
2Do6 Emotional suffering	Old English	bitterness, bitter, unsweet, sour, attery/attray, unsavoury, wersh, tasteless, unpalatable, spiceless;
2Do8 Love and friendship	Old English	sweet, sweetly, palate, sugared, taste, gout, honey-sweet, acquired taste;
2Do9 Hatred and hostility	1350-1399	bitterness, unsavoury, sourly, distaste, disgust, mistaste;

In (10), there is evidence of the use of this adjective to describe people:

10) Lucy is Mrs. Jennings' *vapid* cousin¹⁴.

However, in its contemporary usage, it has lost the connotation of health, as it denotes a lack of interest. Table 4 illustrates the lexical overlap that constitutes the HEALTH IS TASTE metaphor.

The oldest metaphorical links date to the 13th century, while the others concentrate around the 17th century. A state of good health can be described as *sweet* (c1250) as the lexical overlap with category 1Co1 *Health* suggests. An entailment for this metaphor is HEALING IS SEASONING, where seasoning can be sweetening (1Co4 *Healing and treatment*) or adding spices (1Io5 *Invigoration*).

¹⁴ COCA, 2008 FIC.

TABLE 4
Lexical categories in the HEALTH IS TASTE CM

CATEGORY NAME	START ERA	EXAMPLES
1B11 Body parts	1600-1649	sour
1B23 Vascular system	1650-1699	vapid
1C01 Health	1250-1299	sweet
1C04 Healing and treatment	1550-1599	dulcorate, dulcify
1I05 Invigoration	1200-1249	spice

The third semantic domain worth mentioning is that of INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY (see Table 5). I included lexical categories 2Go3 *Speaking* and 2Go8 *Curse* in this domain because I considered words as being reflection of thoughts. Arguably, the lexical overlap in the two categories could have been considered referring to sounds (the sound of words used to communicate), or to content (the content of words that motivate aggression), thus yielding potentially different categorisations. The lexical overlap with categories 2A10 *Cleverness*, 2A14 *Stupidity*, 2A15 *Foolishness*, 2A16 *Intellectual weakness*, and 2A17 *Foolish person* is motivated by the metaphors INTELLIGENCE IS FLAVOUR and INTELLECTUAL WEAKNESS IS LACK OF FLAVOUR (*insipidity*, †*wearish*). The linguistic realisation of FLAVOUR is *salt*, while the realisation of the LACK OF FLAVOUR is *insipidity*. Etymologically, the word *insipid(ity)* comes from Latin (via French), and it means *tasteless(ness)*.

TABLE 5
Lexical categories in the INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY IS TASTE CM

CATEGORY NAME	START ERA	EXAMPLES
2A10 Cleverness	1500-1549	salt; causticity.
2A14 Stupidity	1500-1549	wearish; insipid.
2A15 Foolishness	1600-1649	insipidly; insipidity.
2A16 Intellectual weakness	1600-1649	insipidity.
2A17 Foolish person	1700-1749	insipid; insipidity.
2Go3 Speaking	1350-1399	sweet; sugared; sweeten; dulcify.
2Go8 Curse	Old English	foul; luscious; flavour.

So, seemingly there is a discrepancy here: while the domain LACK OF FLAVOUR is realised with an “appropriate” word that refers to a superordinate category, the domain FLAVOUR is realised with “salt”, which is instead a type of flavour. I argue that the two stand in a metonymic relationship, which is motivated by embodied perception. Salt in fact is widely used among human cultures, and has allegedly played a major role in the evolution of human diets and cooking habits (Cavalieri 2014, Hladik 2007). The prototypical chemical compound that elicits a salty taste (Sodium chloride, NaCl) is a flavour enhancer, enabling the evaporation of aromas, thus favouring flavour perception (Cavalieri 2014: 111-2). Its metonymical use as a referent for *flavour* in general can be motivated on the basis of physical, embodied perception.

The CM identified here may be traced back to the Gospel (Matthew 5:13): “You are the salt of the world. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty again?” (International Standard Version¹⁵). Interestingly, a number of Italian linguistic realisations are cognate with this metaphorical mapping, such as *avere il sale in zucca* (literally: to have salt in the squash), where the squash metonymically refers to the head of an individual. ‘Having salt in the head’ then metaphorically refers to having common sense. The same metaphor motivates the polysemy of It. *sciocco*, *sciapo* (*insipid*, *dull*, *stupid*). Having salt or flavour is having sense or intelligence, and lack of flavour is lack thereof.

An interesting semantic domain that uses Taste as a TD is that of PERSON. Table 6 shows the lexical categories that constitute the PERSON semantic domain. This domain suggests that it is an entailment from the metaphor FOOD IS A HUMAN BEING, namely TASTE IS A QUALITY OF A PERSON. This metaphor is similar to CHARACTER IS TASTE, and it shows an interesting feature of non-unidirectionality.

As illustrated in the previous section, Taste may be used to conceptualise the character, or qualities, of something; however, the qualities of someone may also be used to describe Taste. Thus, a taste can be *dead* (1B26 *Death*, 1B27 *Dead person*, 1B30 *Killing*), *quick* (1B01 *Life*), *mordacious* (1E02 *Animal categories, habitats and behaviours*), and most commonly *strong* (1J08 *Strength*). The

¹⁵ <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matthew+5%3A13&version=ISV>

metaphorical link with 1Jo8 *Strength* is also found in Old English: the OE word †*strang* could be used metaphorically to refer to Taste.

TABLE 6

Lexical categories in the FOOD IS A HUMAN BEING/ TASTE IS THE QUALITY OF A HUMAN BEING CM

CATEGORY NAME	START ERA	EXAMPLES
1Bo1 Life	1550-1599	quick; quicken;
1Bo Bodily shape and strength	1800-1849	keestless; shilpit;
1B26 Death	1550-1599	dead; dead; deadness;
1B27 Dead person	1550-1599	dead; dead;
1B30 Killing	1600-1649	dead; deaden;
1E02 Animal categories, habitats, and behaviour	1600-1649	mordacity; mordacious; mordacious; mordant;
1Jo8 Strength	Old English	strong < strang;
1No4 Rate of movement and swift movement	1700-1749	briskness;

5. Conclusions

In the present paper, I classify the data retrieved by the MMP to investigate the metaphorical transfer from category 1Bo *Taste* and other categories in the HT. The quantitative analysis of the data shows that the number of lexical categories that use Taste as a SD is higher than those that use it as a TD. Secondly, although one category disrespects the principle of unidirectionality, the majority of lexical categories that use Taste as an SD belongs to the Mental World macro-category.

The qualitative analysis is twofold: on one hand, it provides a broad overview of the role of Taste in conceptualisation; on the other hand, it illustrates the main semantic domains that show a metaphorical relationship with Taste. The central mapping is CHARACTER IS TASTE (see its mappings in Table 2) and it accounts for the general role of Taste in conceptualisation. This metaphor motivates the conceptualisation of the character of something or someone as Taste, the act of knowing as the act of tasting, and the quality of the opinion as the quality of the flavour. The motivation

for this conceptualisation is grounded in our embodied cognition: unpalatable flavours (such as *sour* or *bitter*) are most likely found in potentially toxic or dangerous food, while palatable flavours (such as *sweet*) do not represent a threat for humans. The hedonic response to these flavours is then conceptualised as an opinion.

In the second section of the qualitative analysis, I present 4 semantic domains that have a metaphorical link with the domain of Taste, namely FEELINGS, HEALTH and INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY as TD, and PERSON as SD. Each domain is constituted by lexical categories retrieved by the MMP, and the respective lexical items. These CMs motivate the semantic change of taste words, and Tables 3-6 also provide information about their starting point in the history of English. Some metaphorical links prove to be ancient and still living, such as those in the semantic domain of FEELINGS (2Do5 *Pleasure*, 2Do6 *Emotional suffering*, 2Do8 *Love and friendship*, 2Do9 *Hatred and hostility*), and one in PERSON (1Jo8 *Strength*); other links appear to be more recent, such as those found in the domain of INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY.

From a Cognitive Linguistic perspective, linguistic meaning is constrained and motivated by the nature of our species-specific bodies (Evans 2007). It is grounded in our perception. This paper represents an abridged version of a wider analysis on meaning change motivated by taste in English, and it aims at proposing a revaluation of this “lower” sense, in keeping with an embodied perspective of meaning creation. This paper has illustrated how taste sensations play a relevant role in the English speaker’s linguistic conceptualisation. Although it may often go unnoticed, there are tastes we have lived by through the ages.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Wendy Anderson, Dr. Ellen Bramwell, and Dr. Rachael Hamilton of the MMP team at the University of Glasgow for their kindness and assistance during my months spent there. I also would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for the detailed and useful comments on an earlier draft of this contribution. I further extend my gratitude to Prof. Jodi Sandford.

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